

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 27, 2021

Mr. Michael G. Hein
Commissioner
New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
40 N. Pearl St.
Albany, NY 12243

Dear Commissioner Hein,

We write to you today regarding the extreme delays in the disbursement of funds through New York State's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). We urge the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to take every step necessary to accelerate application processing and begin issuing rental assistance payments to qualified tenants immediately.

In June, New York launched its rental assistance program with over \$2 billion set aside to provide significant economic relief to help low- and moderate-income households at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Since then, 160,000 applications have been submitted by tenants in need of rental assistance. However, after nearly two months, New York has been one of the slowest states in distributing these relief funds.

With the moratorium on evictions scheduled to expire at the end of August, our constituents who have been financially impacted by COVID are worried that they will not receive this rental relief in time to remain in their homes. Every state in the country has already started issuing payments to qualified tenants, with several disbursing tens of millions of dollars. It is inconceivable to us that New York would be the only state in the country to have not yet issued any rental relief apart from a few test payments.

The Department of the Treasury has the authority to reallocate funds from states that are not being used. As the entirety of New York is currently a zero-distribution area, this puts much, if not all, of the over \$2 billion earmarked for rental relief in jeopardy of being reallocated elsewhere. This is particularly concerning given that New York has more renters than any other state in the country. The Treasury has guidance, tools, and best practices to offer the State, and we strongly encourage you to work closely with the Department in order to distribute this relief as quickly as possible.

Once again, we would like to urge the OTDA to take every step necessary and utilize all available resources offered by the Treasury Department to issue rental relief payments to qualified tenants immediately. We ask for a written response with the steps OTDA is taking to distribute payments by close of business on Friday, July 30. If we can be of assistance going forward, please contact Tom Curry in Rep. Rice's District Office at (202) 505-0424 or tom.curry@mail.house.gov.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Kathleen M. Rice (NY-04)
Member of Congress

/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney (NY-12)
Member of Congress

/s/ Brian Higgins (NY-26)
Member of Congress

/s/ Grace Meng (NY-06)
Member of Congress

/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi (NY-03)
Member of Congress

/s/ Antonio Delgado (NY-19)
Member of Congress

/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14)
Member of Congress

/s/ Mondaire Jones (NY-17)
Member of Congress

/s/ Jerrold Nadler (NY-10)
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez (NY-07)
Member of Congress

/s/ Hakeem Jeffries (NY-08)
Member of Congress

/s/ Elise Stefanik (NY-21)
Member of Congress

/s/ Lee Zeldin (NY-01)
Member of Congress

/s/ Chris Jacobs (NY-27)
Member of Congress

/s/ Andrew R. Garbarino (NY-02)
Member of Congress